
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6478

AN ACT CONCERNING COURSE ENROLLMENT FEE WAIVERS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ENROLLED AT CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE.

SUMMARY:

This bill extends the current tuition waivers for certain veterans and members of the National Guard who attend the University of Connecticut (UConn), the Connecticut State University (CSU) system, and the regional community-technical colleges to those who attend Charter Oak State College. It requires the Board for State Academic Awards to waive Charter Oak State College course enrollment fees for honorably discharged veterans who served at least 90 days in a time of war and qualified members of the Connecticut National Guard. (Charter Oak State College charges an enrollment fee, not tuition.)

The bill applies to Charter Oak State College enrollment fees the law's system for granting tuition waivers at the state's public universities and colleges, including:

1. authorizing Charter Oak State College to recover federal educational assistance payments under the 2008 Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (see BACKGROUND);
2. requiring Charter Oak State College to give veterans and National Guard members receiving a course enrollment fee waiver the same status for course registration as students not receiving a waiver;
3. requiring the enrollment fee waiver amount to be reduced by any amount of an employer's educational reimbursement; and
4. excluding from war time service time spent attending a military service academy.

It also makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

FEE WAIVER

Qualifying Veterans and National Guard Members

The bill's waiver provisions apply to:

1. veterans with at least 90 days of wartime service during or in specified wars, operations, or conflicts who were honorably discharged or released and living in Connecticut when accepted for admission to Charter Oak State College and
2. active Connecticut Army or Air National Guard member (a) certified by the adjutant general, or his designee, to be in good standing and (b) enrolled in or accepted for admission to Charter Oak State College on a full- or part-time basis.

By law, a veteran is an individual honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions from active duty in the U.S. armed forces. Veterans who served at least 90 days on active duty (or less time if separated during a war period due to a U.S. Veterans' Administration rated service-connected disability or the war lasted less than 90 days) in the U.S. armed forces during a time of war are eligible for a range of benefits, such as the state public higher education tuition waiver, that are not available to those without wartime service.

Post- 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act and Enrollment Fee Waiver

For qualifying veterans who have applied for federal educational assistance under the 2008 Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, the bill requires Charter Oak State College to waive only the course enrollment fee charges that exceed the "veteran course enrollment fee benefit." The bill defines "veteran course enrollment fee benefit" as the portion of federal educational assistance under the federal act paid to the college on a veteran's behalf. To calculate the course enrollment fee benefit, the bill uses a formula similar to the formula in current law for calculating the veteran tuition:

Total amount of federal educational assistance due to the college on behalf of the veteran	x	Actual course enrollment fees charged to the veteran
		<hr/> Sum of actual course enrollment fees and other fees charged to the veteran

Under the bill, if the veteran certifies to the Board for State Academic Awards that his or her application for federal educational assistance has been denied or withdrawn, the board must waive the entire veteran's course enrollment fee.

BACKGROUND

Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008

Veterans, including guard members called to federal active duty, generally qualify for benefits under this federal law if they have served at least 90 days of active duty (unless released earlier for specified reasons), with at least some active duty service on or after September 11, 2001, and were honorably discharged or released from active duty.

The amount of benefits depends on certain factors, including the veteran's enrollment (e.g., part- or full-time) and service status. In general, veterans are eligible for up to 36 months of assistance (four academic years), including tuition and other benefits (e.g., housing, books, and supplies) (Title V of P.L. 110-252).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 10 Nay 0 (03/08/2011)

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/17/2011)